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FRETILIN

Statement by the FRETILIN
delegation to the
Fourth Committee during discussions
on the question of East Timor,
October 23, 1979

FRETILIN's delegation:

- dr. Abílio ARAÚJO
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Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

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May I thank you for the opportunity given to us to address this committee. We seize this occasion with deep appreciation to present before this distinguished assembly the history of the struggle of the People of East Timor for self-determination and independence. In this Committee, are represented sovereign states that, no so long ago, were colonies, suffering the same oppression, humiliation, brutalities, now endured by the martyr people of East Timor.

The people of many countries represented here have fought valiently, at the cost of many thousands of lives, in order to realize their most profound aspirations, independence and sovereignty. For this reason, we are fully convinced that we find commonness in our problems, and aspirations with most of today's U.N. member states. While this decade has seen most colonial countries and its people achieving their independence, there are still some remaining territories to be decolonized.

East Timor was a Portuguese colony for almost 500 years. While all other former Portuguese colonies, namely Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, and Mozambique, have achieved independence, the People of East Timor have been denied their rightful place in the community of nations. The People of East Timor have been unable to exercise freely their right to self-determination, to choose their own future political status, because of Indonesia's neocolonial and expansionist aggression.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates, Indonesia's invasion of East Timor and Moroccan intervention in Western Sahara have brought to this international forum a new aspect of colonialism, more subtle because it is disguised by the skin of the new colonizer, but more brutal than the former colonial powers. Indonesia's invasion of East Timor and Moroccan invasion of Western Sahara have brought to the United Nations an issue that cannot be avoided, an issue that must be openly and energetically discussed. This issue is Third World colonialism. Indonesia itself was a colony for about three centuries. The Indonesian people fought valiantly for their independence and in today's Indonesian government we can find many heroes of Indonesian independence struggle. Many Indonesian generals today, including President Suharto who are the architects of the war in East Timor, were the very same architects of Indonesian victorious independence struggle. However, after achieving its rightful place in the community of nations, Indonesia embarked on a neocolonial and expansionist course. In the 60's, Indonesia was engaged in expansionist war of aggression against Malaysia, and it was only due to British intervention, that Jakarta's expansionist policies were foiled, and Malaysia has won its rightful place in this organization. Now, when East Timor was promised independence by the colonial power, Portugal, Indonesia embarked on a neocolonial and expansionist adventure to suppress the right of the People of East Timor to statehood.

It is ironic and a travesty of principles when Indonesia and Morocco that have opposed Western colonialism should now adopt the same policies

that they have criticized in this very forum. Should we think that Western colonialism is bad, but Third World colonialism, oppression and aggression, atrocities and mass killings, should be accepted and legitimized by this organization? Indonesia's invasion and occupation of East Timor is no less wrong than the Portuguese colonialism, just as Morocco's annexation of Western Sahara is no more justifiable than the Spanish colonialization. Third World countries that have emerged to statehood over the past three decades must uphold the principle for which their people fought. The principles of self-determination, independence, and inviolability of boundaries inherited from colonialism should be sacred to all United Nations Member States. Otherwise, this organization will have no moral strength to enforce its principles if the tragedy of East Timor were to be repeated somewhere else - in Africa, Asia, Latin America or Europe.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

East Timor was first "discovered" by the Portuguese in 1515. In spite of numerous rebellions and stubborn resistance by the East Timorese people, the Portuguese succeeded in colonializing the island for almost 500 years. Five centuries of Portuguese presence left East Timor with a distinct personality. Culturally, socially, politically and historically, East Timor presents different features from Indonesia. Although East Timor is just next door to Indonesia, even the languages spoken in the two countries are completely different.

Ethnically, the people of East Timor belong to the Melanasian stock, more akin to the ethnic groups existing in the South Pacific region, such as Papua New Guinea and Figi, than to the inhabitants of the Indonesian islands of Java and Sumatra, to the west.

East Timor has an area of 18,889 square kilometers, with an estimated population, by Fretilin account, of roughly 1 million. East Timor has exceptional economic potentials.- Oil, gas, and manganese are known to exist in vast quantities. American, British, Australian oil companies have been successful in exploring East Timor's economic zone. The country is very fertile and could feed its population without having to import food from outside, if conditions of peace and security prevailed in the island. Fishing is invaluable in its 630 km. of coast. Tourism would be another source of foreign exchange for the country. In the future, after independence, East Timor would seek active cooperation with every state, particularly its neighbors, regardless of the regimes prevailing in each country.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

Following the April, 1974 revolution in Portugal, the new Lisbon regime recognized the right of the people of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe and East Timor to self-determination and independence.

The new Portuguese government initiated, with the cooperation of local political forces, a program of decolonization for East Timor. According to Portuguese timetable, East Timor would have achieved its independence in 1978. However, Indonesia, breaking all its long-standing promises and assurances of non-interference in East Timorese affairs and respect for East Timor's right to self-determination and independence, launched a full-scale invasion of East Timor on December 7, 1975. Had not Indonesia invaded the territory, the people of East Timor would have now exercised their right to self-determination and independence.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

The government of Indonesia, justified its invasion of East Timor on the grounds to restore "peace and order" and in answer to a "request" by a local government. Which local government? Portugal was and is the only administering power of East Timor. Portugal was the only power responsible for that colony, and accepted as such by all political forces in the territory, to conduct a program of decolonization, consisting of elections for a constituent assembly, and a referendum to decide the future of the territory. The Portuguese government did not request Indonesia's intervention in East Timor. On the contrary, it broke off diplomatic relations with Jakarta when East Timor was invaded by the armed forces of Indonesia.

The excuse to restore "peace and order" by the government of Indonesia is indeed a very dangerous one. The world would be in chaos if some countries should claim the role of policeman and intervene in the affairs of other countries. Should any state move its army across the border of its neighbor because a civil war broke out between different political or religious groups? Such excuses for armed intervention must be strongly rejected because, at this very moment, there are situations of civil war in some parts of the world, and if the international community set a precedent on the East Timor question, the territorial integrity and sovereign rights of many states would be at stake.

Indonesia's invasion of East Timor was by all definitions an act of armed aggression, and as such, it should not be legitimized by this organization. Article 4, paragraph 1 of the definition of aggression states "no consideration of whatever nature, whether political, economic, military or otherwise, may serve as a justification for aggression." Paragraph 2 states "a war of aggression is a crime against international peace. Aggression gives rise to international responsibility." Paragraph 3, finally, may I quote: "No territorial acquisition or special advantage resulting from aggression is or shall be recognized as lawful."

It has been on the basis of these legal considerations, that the United Nations has not sanctioned Israeli occupation of Arab lands siezed during the Six Day War by Israel. Indonesia's invasion and occupation of East Timor is as unlawful and illegitimate as the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

In view of this parallelism, it would be utterly contradictory and very harmful to the force of international law if Indonesia's aggression against East Timor was to be condoned or ignored.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

In reaction to Indonesia's invasion of East Timor, the following resolutions have been adopted:

General Assembly resolutions 3485 (xxx) of 12 December 1975, 31/53 of 1 December 1976, 32/34 of 28 November 1977 and 33/39 of 13 December 1978 and Security Council resolutions 384 (1975) of 22 December 1975 and 389 (1976) of 22 April 1976.

All of these resolutions have repeatedly called upon the government of Indonesia to withdraw all of its troops from East Timor "without delay". The Security Council resolution 354 (1975) was adopted unanimously. All five permanent members of the Security Council "deplored" Indonesia's invasion of East Timor and called for the withdrawal of all its forces from the territory. However, the government of Indonesia has not complied with these U.N. resolutions and has escalated its war of aggression against East Timor. The government of Indonesia has made a mockery of international law.

I wish, at this point, to draw the attention of members of the Non-Aligned movement to the following:

- In 1976, the Fifth Summit of Head of States and Governments of the Non-Aligned countries, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, stated in its final declaration, : "Reaffirms the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolution concerning the question of East Timor." Of the 85 members of the Movement, only some ten delegations made reservations on this declaration.

- Three years later, the Sixth Summit, held in Havana, Cuba, from September 3 to 7, again reaffirmed the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolution. This declaration which clearly supported the right of the people to self-determination and called for Indonesia's immediate withdrawal from East Timor were supported almost unanimously,

- More than two-third of the membership of the Non-Aligned Movement have repeatedly called for Indonesia's withdrawal from East Timor and for self-determination and independence of the inhabitants of that territory.

However, Indonesia, a founding member, has betrayed the sacred principles that inspired the birth of the Movement that since its inception has been a driving force of social transformation, justice, new economic order, and peace.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

May I now turn to the position of the administering power. Her Excellency, the Prime Minister of Portugal, Mrs. Pintasilgo, in her

address to the General Assembly on October 1st, stated:

"Another people, that of East Timor, which is directly linked by historical ties to my country, continues to see its legitimate right to self-determination rejected. Despite several condemnations in the United Nations, despite resolutions adopted by this General Assembly and by the Security Council, the people of East Timor has not so far been able effectively to exercise this right, and Portugal, as the administering Power, has not been able alone to change the unjust situation created in that Territory. Therefore we direct an appeal to the international conscience so that conditions may be rapidly created allowing for a progressive normalization of the living conditions of the populations of East Timor."

On May 22, the Portuguese Parliament, in a unique unanimous vote, adopted two resolutions concerning the question of East Timor, introduced simultaneously by the Social Democratic and the Socialist parties. May I quote each of the resolutions. The Social Democratic proposal reads as follows:

- Considering the profound cultural and emotional ties between the people of East Timor and Portugal;
- Considering the invasion and the annexation of East Timor by the armed forces of the Republic of Indonesia;
- Considering the Constitutional mandate which imposes on Portugal its responsibilities to promote and to guarantee the right of the people of East Timor to independence;
- Considering the necessity to alert the national and international public opinion about the drama of the people of East Timor who are subjected to genocide . . .

The Assembly of the Republic:

1) Expresses its profoundest concern at the situation in which the (East) Timorese people are living, as a result of the invasion of their territory by forces of the Republic of Indonesia (which) has prevented and prevents the exercise of the right to self-determination and independence by the people of East Timor;

2) Expresses the necessity that the authoritative organs of Sovereignty take all appropriate and necessary steps for the liberation of the people of (East) Timor, including the recourse to authoritative international organs.

The Socialist resolution states:

- Considering the fraternal relations forged by the people of Portugal and East Timor ...;
- Bearing in mind the fact that Portugal has been bestowed upon by the Constitution (of the Republic) to promote and to guarantee the access to independence of that territory;
- Considering that East Timor was invaded and is occupied militarily by the armed forces of Indonesia;
- Considering that such intervention and occupation are contrary to the rules of international law ...
- Bearing in mind that the brutalities committed by the Indonesian authorities have shocked and caused repulse . . .
- Taking into account the fact that the Maubere people (of East Timor) are still engaged in armed struggle against Indonesian occupation;
- And bearing in mind that Article 7 of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic recognizes the right of people to oppose all forms of oppression.

The Assembly of the Republic, ... representative of all Portuguese people, and (faithful) to the historical and constitutional responsibility of Portugal, condemns the illegitimate, illegal and violent occupation of East Timor by Indonesia and affirms its fraternal solidarity with the people of that territory in their struggle for liberation.

These two resolutions were carried unanimously by the Assembly of the Republic.

On May 20, 1979, an international conference was held in Lisbon, Portugal, attended by 800 delegates from all over the world, to discuss the question of East Timor. The conference strongly condemned Indonesia's invasion of East Timor and called upon the government of Indonesia to withdraw all its forces from the territory.

In September, the Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting in Caracas, Venezuela adopted a declaration on East Timor, reaffirming the right of the people of that territory to self-determination and independence. It should be noted that there was only one, I repeat one, dissenting voice, the lonely voice from the Indonesian representative.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

The government of Indonesia claims that East Timor is now part of the Republic of Indonesia and that the people of East Timor have already exercised their right to self-determination in accordance with Resolutions 1514 (XV) and of 1541 (XV). This ridiculous Indonesian claim is contradicted by the Declaration on the granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People which declares that:

1. The subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human

rights, is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation.

2. All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

3. All armed action or repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples shall cease in order to enable them to exercise peacefully and freely their right to complete independence, and the integrity of their national territory shall be respected.

Resolution 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960, Principle VI states:

A Non-Self-Governing Territory can be said to have reached a full measure of self-government by:

- (a) Emergence as a sovereign independent State;
- (b) Free association with an independent State; or
- (c) Integration with an independent State.

Principle IX of the same resolution spells out the procedures to be followed before a non-self-governing territory becomes integrated with an independent states:

(a) The integrating territory should have attained an advanced stage of self-government with free political institutions, so that its peoples would have the capacity to make a responsible choice through informed and democratic processes;

(b) The integration should be the result of the freely expressed wishes of the Territory's peoples acting with full knowledge of the change in their status, their wishes having been expressed through informed and democratic processes, impartially conducted and based on universal adult suffrage.

The United Nations could, when it deems it necessary, supervise these processes.

Let's detail the procedures by which the government of Indonesia followed to reach the conclusion that the people of East Timor decided to integrate into the Indonesian Republic. Following its invasion of East Timor, the government of Indonesia announced on May 31, 1976, that a "People's Assembly" had been "elected". This so-called "Assembly" consisted of 28 elements and its unique function was to vote on one single item: the integration of East Timor into Indonesia. Even this puppet Assembly did not have a choice. The invalidity and illegality were seen even by pro-Indonesian circles. I will turn to statements made by Mr. George Aldrich, a State Department official, during a hearing on East Timor, on May 23, 1977, in the Congressional Subcommittee on International Organizations and on Asian and Pacific Affairs. Mr. Aldrich said: "The process itself took place at a time of military occupation by Indonesian during which considerable fighting was still going on".

A "Washington Post" correspondent, Mr. Hammish McDonald, who is well-known for his pro-Indonesian bias, wrote on May 31:

"Today's meeting is presented as an act of self-determination. The observers had no chance to probe its authenticity, however. Proceedings were held in Portuguese and explanations were sketchy."

The Indonesian weekly TEMPO described the restrictions placed on the small Press party:

"We were not allowed to leave the building. As soon as we took a step down the stairs officials in civilian clothes told us to go back. We were not even allowed to speak to assembly members in the vicinity."

The United Nations' Special Committee on Decolonization had no part in the Indonesian sponsored assembly. In a futile attempt to win international recognition of its annexation of East Timor, the government of Indonesia formally invited the Chairman of the Special Committee on Decolonization and the Secretary General to attend the farcical "election". However, His Excellency, Ambassador Salim Salim and the Secretary General turned down Indonesia's invitations to rubber-stamp its grotesque farce.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

To accept Indonesian claims that the People of East Timor have exercised their right to self-determination, on the basis of this so-called "People's Assembly" would be so much an error and injustice as to accept the "internal settlement" in Southern Rhodesia masterminded by Mr. Smith, or to accept South African Bantustans.

We firmly adhere to the belief and the principles that the United Nations, through the Special Committee on Decolonization, is the only authoritative body, capable of supervising elections or a referendum to determine the future status of colonial countries and peoples. In order to guarantee a minimum of fairness, justice and democracy, broad

international supervision is required. Fretilin - the East Timor national liberation front - of which I am a humble representative, calls for a referendum in East Timor, under the U.N. supervision, in order to ascertain the real wishes of the people of that territory. We would go further as to accept Indonesian full participation in the arrangements leading toward that referendum. An international police force comprising of forces from various countries, including those of Indonesia, could station in the territory during and until the conclusion of the referendum process. The government of Indonesia certainly, as a member state, and confident that the People of East Timor would vote for integration with Indonesia, should not object to a U.N. participation. It is now up to the government of Indonesia to prove to the world that its position in regard to the question of East Timor is just. Otherwise, one can only conclude that Indonesia's intervention in East Timor was motivated by territorial expansionism and economic ambitions. Indonesia's refusal to cooperate with the United Nations in order to facilitate the implementation of Resolution 1514 and 1541 is a blatant defiance of the whole international community and a clear proof of her own weakness and guilt.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

It is almost four years since Indonesia's invasion of East Timor. In the course of these years, the People of East Timor have fought heroically against foreign domination.

Inspite of Indonesia's overwhelming military superiority, the national resistance has continued unabated. Today, Indonesia's military presence in East Timor numbers some 30,000 troops, backed by air force, helicopters, tanks and armored cars. Indonesian forces control all the major towns, but the vast countryside remains under the administration of the patriotic forces. Indonesian army has suffered thousands of casualties, while the cost of the war is conservatively estimated at half a million dollars a day. Every week, Indonesian army suffers an average of thirty casualties. In July of this year, in one single engagement, an entire Indonesian unit of more than 100 men was estimated in the mountainous interiors. Dozens of trucks, jeeps and other vehicles have been destroyed during the last six months. Many tones of weaponry and ammunition have been captured by the East Timor National Liberation Forces. As evidence of Indonesian military weakness in East Timor, the pro-government press in Jakarta has reported that the Indonesian defense minister, Gen. Yusent, has been to East Timor 14 times this year alone, in order to boost the morale of the soldiers. Newspapers show General Yusent on the front, in East Timor, camping with Indonesian soldiers and encouraging the demoralized Army. However, inspite of all Indonesian efforts to crush the resistance, it is now certain that the war will continue as long as a political solution, acceptable to the East Timorese people is not found, within the United Nations framework, or bilaterally between the true representatives of East Timor and the government of Indonesia.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

The tragedy that has swept the island over the past four years has no parallel in East Timor history. As an East Timorese, and as a human being, I am personally horrified and frightened when I look into reports, letters, eyewitness accounts from so many sources about the tragedy in that island that once was a paradise. All available information assert that more than 100,000 people and maybe as many as 200,000 have died from the war, starvation, disease and malnutrition. The figure of 200,000 means that 20% of the entire population of that territory has perished. Evidence of this holocaust abound and I should quote some sources beyond suspicion:

- A confidential church report, published in the prestigious Melbourne "Age" of 19 November 1976, claims that at least sixty thousand Timorese have been killed since Indonesian forces invaded East Timor.

- On 13 February 1976, barely two months after the Indonesian invasion, Mr. Francisco Lopes de Cruz, "Deputy Governor", installed by the government of Indonesia, said that sixty thousand people had died.

- On March 30, 1977, the then Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Mr. Adam Malik, currently Vice-President of the Republic, said: "50,000 people or perhaps 80,000 might have been killed during the war in East Timor ... It was war ... Then what is the big fuss?"

- Following Malik's revelations, Australian parliamentarian Ken Fry stated that the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs had information that between 70 to 80 East Timorese were being killed daily by Indonesian troops.

- In July, 1977, Australian television journalist, Mr. Richard Carleton, who toured selected Indonesian-controlled villages reported that one of his informants put the number of East Timorese killed by Indonesian forces at 50,000. Mr. Carleton observed that in the streets of Dehli, "about one person in five still wears a black arm band of mourning."

- Some three months after Carleton's visit, a French photo-journalist, Denis Reichle, entered East Timor clandestinely across the border from Indonesian Timor and reported that "thirty thousand Indonesian troops are still roaming East Timor slaying men, women and children." Denis Reichle gave an estimate of 70-75,000 East Timorese killed by Indonesian forces in 18 months of war. The French journalist wrote that "a German priest had been driven insane by the constant killings in his area."

A report by the Australian counsel for Overseas Aid, published in July, 1979, provides new and more detailed information about the human tragedy in Indonesian-occupied areas of East Timor. Even in Dili, the report says, "people go hungry and they are dying every day." I quote a section of the report:

"Everywhere people are burying their dead. "During the first week of March, between 1 March and 8 March, twenty-six people have been buried in this parish. The catechist opened his prayer book where he had recorded one hundred and one burials in February, seventy-four burials in January 1979. The next morning there was another burial. The corpse was covered with bamboo as the people are too poor to make a wooden coffin. Since 1976 half the population of this town has gone. One hundred and twenty deaths were recorded in Turiscai January to March 1979. There are reports that three hundred die each month at the Ermera camp."

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

The tragedy of the People of East Timor, inflicted upon them by Indonesia's military intervention, has not only been a tragedy of hunger, malnutrition, and disease. What is more horrifying and beyond human comprehension, is the systematic mistreatment, torture, execution of unarmed civilians or captured freedom fighters. An East Timorese refugee told:

"I saw burns all over the faces of my friends, which they said had been inflicted by the Indonesians with cigarettes: all over the face, up the nostrils; one man's moustache was burnt off. One had a big scar . . . When I took cigarettes to these prisoners, the Indonesians would take the cigarettes and use them to torture prisoners again."

An East Timorese, who left East Timor in mid-September and is now living in Lisbon, Portugal, said: "In Maubisse, a man was accused of being anti-Indonesia. Indonesian soldiers hit him and then used a rock to smash his face. Then they shot the man and called the population to gather wood and burn his body. This particular incident took place in June 1979, near a church."

According to refugee accounts, women prisoners did not escape Indonesian brutalities. According to one refugee, "of the women prisoners in the San Tai Ho building, nearly all were pregnant by Indonesian soldiers. The women were kept naked all the time."

Another refugee said that in a prison in Baucau, prisoners were savagely beaten and ". . . the sex organs of the males are burnt with alcohol and candlelight and the married women are brutally abused and the young women raped."

It is beyond any doubt, that systematic killings, torture, rape, looting, occur in Indonesian-controlled areas. The government of Indonesia, and the Indonesian delegation in this committee, might deny these charges. No one should expect aggressors and violators of human rights to accept their guilt.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

The people of my country, my people, the mountain peasants, the youth, the children, the women of East Timor, are suffering. They are dying from starvation. They are hungry. They are naked. They are plagued by malaria and tuberculosis. They are hungry and they are dying because their crops have been destroyed by Indonesian bombs. They are dying from the wounds of war and disease because no medical supplies or doctors are available to them.

In this International Year of the Child, Mr. Chairman and Distinguished delegates, may I appeal to you, to remember the children of my country who are suffering and dying.

Let me ask you to hear for a moment the tears of hunger, nakedness, illness, desperation and agony of the children of my country.

In this International Year of the Child, may I appeal to the consciousness of the international community, represented in this committee, to call upon the government of Indonesia to lift the aerial and naval blockade of the island and allow the world at large to bring humanitarian assistance to the People of East Timor. The international community must call upon the government of Indonesia to uphold the fundamental principles that have guided the creation of the United Nations. The international community, the African states that know just too well what colonialism means to people and how strong is the desire for freedom. The countries of Latin America that have such a heroic history of struggle for independence; the countries of Asia, that have seen so much wars and suffering; the countries of Europe that saw their lands devastated by two (2) world wars.

These nations represented here do have the legitimacy, the right, the responsibility to call upon the Government of Indonesia to cease its war of aggression against East Timor, and to withdraw from the island to that the people of that non-self-governing territory may finally exercise their sacred right to self-determination in accordance with Resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV).

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Distinguished delegates.